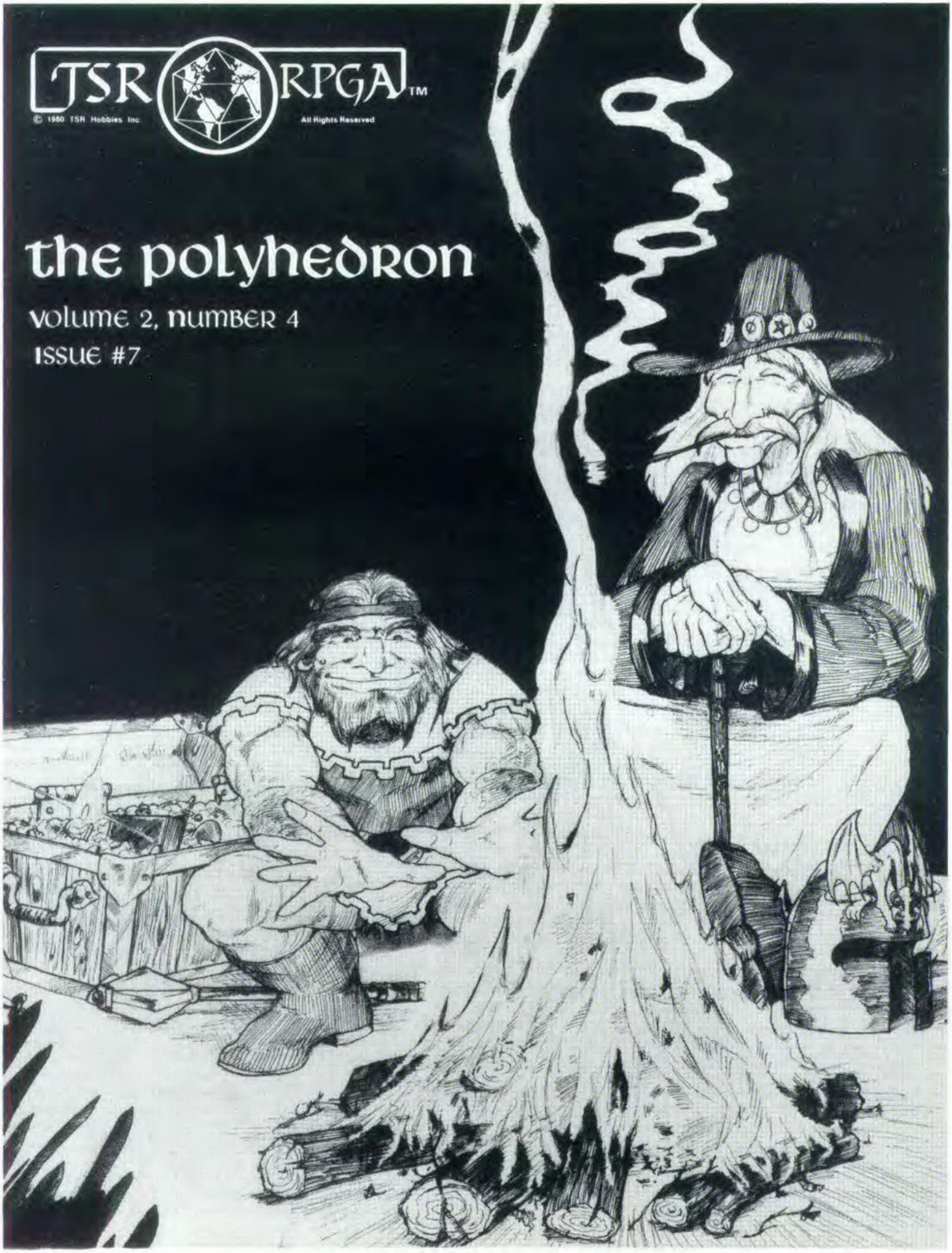
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the polyhedron
volume 2, number 4
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Where I'm Coming From

by Frank Mentzer

Where from?

Well, it was the Autumn of 1980. TSR asked me (ME, a lowly but hard-working member of the editorial staff) to start this club they had in mind. They wanted a membership card, button, and a newsletter. I got to work, ecstatic with the chance to — well, to do what I knew I could.

1981: Bill Hoyer arrives. He goes back to the early game conventions, knows the hobby, knows what YOU want, and how to find you. He gets us organized (as I tend to run around doing anything and everything that sounds interesting). I think of things, he gets stuck doing them.

Growth. Mary Altergott arrives, helps bail us out from piles of paper. Her dulcet tones greet you when you call; her hands assemble your membership packages, Gift Catalog orders... She and Bill become the entire overworked behind-the-scenes crew.

1982: Mary Kirchoff arrives as editor. During an unmerciful 2-month grilling in formats, procedures, editing and layout skills, etc. etc. etc., she not only withstands the gale-force winds of training, but makes it possible to get CAUGHT UP! The newsletters start appearing on time.

Where to?

Welcome Kim Eastland, formerly of Grenadier Models, to occupy my "hot seat." A furious exchange of data follows, in which I ramble on about the RPGA philosophy, goals, ideals, plans... he has plans, too, and brings many assets. You'll find out.

It's time for me to move on. I'll still write *Dispel Confusion, Spelling Bee, Notes for the Dungeon Master...* but I'll be very, very busy working with Gary. Gotta write a bunch of things that you'll see over the next two years. Boy, have we got things for you!

I've received a unique honor, and I'll take a while to get used to it. Kind of hard to explain, but essentially I'm to be #2, right after Gary, when it comes to D&D® rules, AD&D™ games, and so forth. I hope to clean up all the holes, reorganize the books a bit, and generally polish up the systems.

We get too many letters asking "What does this mean?" or "How do you do this?." Maybe in a couple of years, newcomers to the D&D game will actually be able to pick it up and find it all there, all questions answered, no loopholes to fill, and so forth. I hope.

As I said, I'll be around. You can still find me at this address, and I'll be at the conventions.

Well, I guess this is it. Hrmph; it's sort of like building a boat from scratch, finding a good crew, setting sail for a far horizon — and getting off before leaving the harbor to help rebuild the shipyard.

Ah, well. We can only try. Later!

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The POLYHEDRON

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LETTERS

Letters may be sent to "Editor, The POLYHEDRON," c/o RPGA™ Network HQ.

"Your winter 1981-82 RPGA™ Newsletter was so good that it convinced me to buy the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game. The step by step action made me feel like I was actually flying a plane!"

—JN, Indiana

Thanks! We hope to have more play-by-play accounts of these and other games in the future. FITS (as it is commonly known) is a good combat game, and with the new role playing rules added (the revision being called the DAWN PATROL™ game), it has become a favorite of ours.

"My mom says that D&D® games are bad for me, because I spend too much time on it. Help! — MH, California

Sorry; listen to your mom. You shouldn't get too tied up with anything; *too much D&D game play can be like too much television, keeping you inside all the time and leading to missed homework and other problems.*

If you eat too many peaches, you get sick, but nobody's banned peaches. If you keep your D&D game play in proportion, remembering that it's just a game, you should be able to get into plenty of games while getting the other things done.

"Is there a news blackout in the RPGA™ Network offices? I wrote to you in April and told you that I hadn't received *any* newsletters since the *WINTER* issue, and I got no reply.

"In addition, the name of the newsletter was in the June issue of DRAGON™ magazine, which came out before The POLYHEDRON!" —TS, Illinois

Sorry about that. Problems in printing delayed our first issue this year — by a month or two! It was due to arrive long before the issue of DRAGON™ magazine that started our regular "Bulletin" page.

As with each complaint or question we've checked on everything right away, and you should get future newsletters on time and without any problems.

"I'm an avid AD&D™ player, but cannot find enough people in my area who play at my level. Is there any way that I could play AD&D™ games through the mail with people all over the country?"

—RF, Connecticut

We will be reprinting an excellent article on play-by-mail D&D games, starting this fall. Our British counterparts seem to have done a fine job handling the problems with this type of game, and this series from the D&D™ PA Newsletter will fill a need requested by many of our own members.

DISPEL CONFUSION

Your AD&D™ game questions will receive Official Answers through this column. Send questions to "Dispel Confusion" c/o RPGA™ Network HQ.

Q: What good is the D&D® "Expert Set", and how does it fit into the game system?
A: "Expert" is the second in the D&D Basic series, and is NOT part of the AD&D™ system. It does give many tips for wilderness and campaign play, along with map symbols and other details helpful with both systems.

Q: In the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ENDLESS QUEST™ book "Pillars of Pentegarn," the party is attacked by a dragon skeleton. In the Players Handbook, it says that only humans can be animated. What's correct?
A: All of the new ENDLESS QUEST™ books from TSR are based on the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system, which is different from the AD&D™ game procedures. In AD&D games, humanoid skeletons are the limit, but that includes giants (needing high level clerics).

If you haven't gotten these books, check them out. They're exciting adventures, with lively characters and story lines plus excellent art all the way around. The reader makes decisions along the way, determining the results of most encounters — just like in D&D games.

Q: At what level of magic use does a ranger cast druidic and magic-user spells? This affects range, duration, and damage all the time.
A: This has been long debated among the Game Wizards, and a decision has been reached. When a ranger reaches 8th level, he or she then starts using druid spells; the number and level of spells are given in a chart in the ranger class description, and they do NOT get any bonuses due to wisdom. Their casting level is ONE at that point, and additional levels increase the casting level.

Thus, the "druid level" of the ranger is always his or her level minus 7.

Magic use takes a lot of practice, and there's no reason why a 9th level ranger, a novice at the craft, should be able to dump off 5 magic missiles the first time it's tried. The ranger must find a tutor, get a spell book, and study spells as a normal magic-user would (we recommend that the DM allow the ranger to find a tutor easily). The level of magic use is always equal to the ranger's level minus eight.

Starting spell books and other details are all handled normally for the ranger who reaches 9th level and gains the ability to use magic-user spells.

Q: I still don't understand what to do about magic armor, armor — weight, encumbrance, and so forth.
A: If you had to carry around a 5' cube of styrofoam, it would be *very* bulky (high encumbrance) but not heavy (little weight). Magic armor is bulky, and has encumbrance equal to half normal; but for actual weight, it only loads you down as much as normal clothing. This is *NOT* apparent until the armor is worn; magical armor found somewhere will weigh as much as non-magical armor until someone puts it on.

Q: My 1/2 elf cleric/magic-user has invented a long-range curing spell, which is exactly the same as a *magic missile* except that it cures instead of damaging. What do you think of this, and what level should the spell be?
A: Our opinion matches Gary's, here: a ranged *cure* is too powerful. *ALL* the cure spells are by touch, and relate back to the mythological "laying on hands" attributed to folklore curing of all types. Sorry, but note that the cleric may wear ANY type of armor, and may get into the fighting while staying protected. You're getting into game balance here, too. This could have extensive long-range effects, and would need lots of playtesting before addition to a campaign.

RPGA Interview with... MIKE CARR

The POLYHEDRON presents Part I of a two part interview series with Executive Vice President of the Manufacturing Division, author of the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ aerial combat game and DAWN PATROL™ role playing game, co-author of two TOP SECRET™ game modules, one DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game module, editor of the first three AD&D™ hardbound books: Monster Manual, Players Handbook, and Dungeon Masters Guide, and eighth employee of TSR Hobbies, Michael Lee Carr.

HQ: How did you arrive with TSR? What was the story of how you heard about them?

MC: I've long been a gamer — started out as so many people did with Avalon Hill games, classic and historical war games.

HQ: Like WHEN are we talking?

MC: Starting in the 8th grade, which would be 1964. And games have always been of interest to me, while I was growing up, like Parker Brothers games and every other type, and moving into war games, and this field was kinda a natural inclination. I designed the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game in 1968 after seeing the movie "The Blue Max" when I was 16 years old, which besides being a great movie was very inspiring to me, which prompted my interest in World War I aviation design.

HQ: Long before you even thought of doing this for a living?

MC: Oh yeah, definitely. I am just like many other hobbyists, other than being very fortunate to parley this interest into a career which has been very exciting and enjoyable. The game itself was published on my own originally for three editions, then by Guidon Games — Lowry, Don Lowry of Lowry Enterprises.

HQ: You mentioned that, for you, it was a natural transition to go from Parker Brothers games and things like that into war games. What element of your interest, led you in that direction?

MC: Well, I don't think that it's so much war games *per se* as a general love of games that keeps a person interested. Most kids, regardless of their background, play games while they're growing up — it's really unfortunately a relative few that stay with that when they become adults.

HQ: So you wrote this game after seeing "The Blue Max," and published it on your own for a while. And where did things go from there?

MC: Well then, after this fourth edition or actually the first real published edition was done by Guidon Games, it was about the time that TSR was starting up. I approached Gary Gygax and Don Kaye, the co-founders of Tactical Studies Rules, and they expressed an interest in considering the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game as one of their future releases, and that was in 1974-75. TSR then did publish the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game as one of its first games — not the first, because the DUNGEON® boardgame and EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE game and of course the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game were prior to that, but it was one of their earliest published games. That is what kind of led me into the job at TSR.

HQ: Great. You could have just sold the game to Tactical Studies Rules. Why did you join them and actually start doing this for a living?

MC: Well, they knew me, because of the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game, and they knew that I could do designing of some sort. I had known Gary as an acquaintance through the IFW, as I also knew Bill Hoyer, Len Lakofka — other people who are still active in the hobby, and I had expressed some interest in TSR which was becoming more and more the growing concern at that time, and that was when I was approached. Would I be interested in joining TSR in a full time capacity? So I quit my job at the Ground Round Restaurant in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where I was Assistant Manager, and took about a 50% pay cut to come to work for TSR, and that was in March of '76.

HQ: Where were you living at this time?

MC: I grew up in St. Paul and at that time I was living in Cedar Rapids Iowa, which was in 1974-75.

HQ: What was your job at first — what were you hired to do?

MC: At first I came on and worked in the new Dungeon Hobby Shop, which, if you can keep it in perspective, was actually the living room of a house at 723 Williams Street in Lake Geneva. And shortly thereafter I was trained as an editor by Brian Blume to handle the production part of TSR's publishing efforts in the games area.

HQ: Since you were around with TSR and since you were editing at the time, I guess you were the one to edit a lot of the early D&D® products —

MC: Yeah; three of the hardbound books. I've had the pleasure of working with a lot of Gary's material, and it's been very enjoyable. To be a part of the production process associated with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game as well as the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game materials, as popular as they are, and being able to write 3 of the forewords for the hardbound books has been a lot of fun, and hopefully can impart a little of MY philosophy in a certain way to people who play these types of games.

I was also able to write a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game module, the B-1 module, which I oriented to new players, as a basic module, from the standpoint of the fact that I was NOT a die-hard DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game player myself, and from some of the comments I've received on that, it's been pretty beneficial for new players, in terms of helping them learn the game. Which is of course the purpose of the B series of modules.

HQ: At the moment your title is. . . ?

MC: Executive Vice President of the Manufacturing Division.

HQ: Thank you. We've been asking everybody — Jim Ward and Jake Jaquet — what they remember about the 'old days.' Do you have any anecdotes, or stories about what things were like back then?

MC: Well, in the early days of TSR, — 1976-1977 — we had the Wednesday game nights where we would play either a D&D game or the latest module. The 'latest modules' at that time were the earliest modules, really, if you look at the full spectrum of them now. We would get together, and get a couple of six packs of pop and beer, and some munchies, and just have a go at whatever we were playtesting, or just getting together for a social game of anything. And Ernie Gygax would be there, and Gary Gygax, Jim Ward when he was in town, and other TSR people, and local Lake Geneva gamers. It was a very informal and enjoyable undertaking which we did on a semi-regular basis.

HQ: Going way back then, were you at the first GEN CON® game convention?

MC: Well, I'm fortunate to say that I've been to all 14 of the past GEN CON® game conventions —

HQ: ALL of them?

MC: I'm in that rather select group, I suppose — an infamous group; and I'm really pretty proud of that. It's been fascinating to see the GEN CON® game convention from its original conception and form to what it is today. And I'm looking forward to the possibility, next summer, of the Consumer Services division of TSR putting on a "GEN CON Convention Revisited," or whatever they choose to call it, at Horticultural Hall as kind of an old-time get-together reminiscent of days past, and featuring games from the early days of this hobby.

HQ: What would you say was the initial purpose of conventions as compared to what they are now?

MC: Well, conventions initially were simply a gathering of people to have a good time and to play games, and conventions still exist for that purpose. Now, some people assume that since game companies sponsor conventions, they must be raking off tremendous sums of money by their sponsorship. I would say nothing is FURTHER from the way it really is; the GEN CON® conventions, when you consider the amount of hours and labor that go into the preparation, which are just awesome, are not greatly profitable, from that standpoint. So TSR runs its conventions for the gamer, as much as for anything else, and that was always the case and it still is.

HQ: They're still accomplishing that, even though the GEN CON® game convention has grown so much?

MC: Yes, and I think even more so, because now dealers and manufacturers can come to these conventions and have exhibit booths where they sell their goods, which allows *them* to grow and prosper, as *well* as affords the gamer tremendous assortment and opportunity to sample the goods, so to speak, and to see it all under one roof in displays which far outdistance what's available at the local hobby store. And really, to participate in the ambience of a convention, and all the broad range of activities that are a part of it, be it the GEN CON® game convention or any other.

They're a lot of work for us at TSR, but it's a break in the routine; there's no substitute for getting out with the people who play our games, and to enjoy the atmosphere of the whole celebration of this hobby. And it is fun.

It's the enthusiasm that's infectious, really. When you see some of these role playing gamers, and how excited

(Gaming in 1971 — Mike, right)

they are about what they're doing, and just the thrill that they're having, to be at GEN CON® game convention, and to play in these tournaments, and to meet new people; it's infectious.

Well, the concept of the game convention came from gamers in general, wanting to get together, and Gary Gygax in particular instigated the first national gaming convention in Lake Geneva, which was in 1968. And it grew from there. The first GEN CON® game convention was really run under the aegis of the IFW (International Federation of Wargaming) of which people that are active today, Gary Gygax, Bill Hoyer, of the RPGA™ Network staff; Len Lakofka; John Bobek . . . and others, were the people behind the IFW and putting on the GEN CON® game convention really as the first national gaming convention. And I was also an IFW member, and attended the first one.

In the early days of the GEN CON® game convention, the gaming scene of course was very much different than it is today. Not only were there fewer gamers, but there were fewer games to be played! I would say that in the current era, the game conventions are very much featuring the role playing games, and the very large tournaments with hundreds of people, in the case of the AD&D™ Open tournaments that are run and some of the larger RPGA™ tournaments. In the older days, miniatures were predominant. Naval miniatures, in particular, were very popular — games like Fletcher Pratt and the Avalon Hill boardgames.

We played the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game at the #1 GEN CON® game convention and we've been playing it every year, as we will play the DAWN PATROL™ game this year. And every year at the GEN CON® game convention we actually have a "Dawn Patrol" game, where we play at an early morning hour on Saturday morning at either 7:00 or 7:30 AM, and it's kind of a "red eye" approach to gaming. That's been very popular; we have 40 or more people participating in that this year, I'm sure.

HQ: How do you handle 40 people in a game like that?

MC: Well, it used to be everyone just at one board. NOW when we play, we plan for 14 to 16 players at each of three boards. We try to get a different group of judges every year, so that others can play more.

HQ: So these early GEN CON® game conventions were mostly miniatures gaming?

MC: Miniatures are still a part of the GEN CON® game convention, although the role playing has tended to move to center stage, so to speak, and what I think is most enjoyable about the GEN CON® game convention as a convention is the fact that there's such a tremendous variety of events and offerings available, from seminars to board games to tournaments to the dealer booths and the role playing events and historical simulations and everything else under the sun that's available.

HQ: Not to mention thousands of people from all over the world.

MC: Lots of camaraderie, and good times. In that sense, the GEN CON® game convention has not changed; it's always remained my favorite August activity, and still is, and I hope that the day can come when the 50th GEN CON® game convention rolls around, I'll come in and be able to sit down and participate, as well as judge.

HQ: Gary mentioned the camaraderie, as you have, but he mentioned it in a

less favorable light. He said that the latest conventions seem to have lost a lot of that.

MC: Well, in any recollection of the past there's always a longing for the "good old days," and I think the conventions are certainly that way. Those of us who participated in the early conventions have fond memories of how it was back then, without air conditioning, and how we endured the less-than-comfortable surroundings, really, for the hobby that we loved and the games. In a sense that's true, the hobby has grown so much and there's such an influx of new people of all different interests that perhaps some of that closeness is gone. The fact is that at a convention of 100 to 300 people there were a lot of faces that you knew, and now when you attend the GEN CON® game convention there's a lot of faces that you DON'T know, because of the sheer numbers. There's still the opportunity to meet new people, to make new friends, to look for individuals at the convention year after year, and really to form the basis of a new camaraderie.

HQ: The GEN CON® game convention had been going for a few years when ORIGINS started up; can you recall the time in there?

MC: I would guess 1976 or '77. . .

HQ: Those have been the Big Two, then, all the way along. The GEN CON® game convention has been called a 'local' convention, regardless of size, because it does not move around, where ORIGINS does, whereas they're about the same size. Have you noticed any difference between the two in flavor?

MC: Well, in flavor there's definitely a difference, because of the fact that the GEN CON® game convention nowadays is co-sponsored by TSR Hobbies, and role playing is emphasized. ORIGINS, because of the fact that it is co-sponsored by other companies, would emphasize historical games. Now, that's a difference in flavor, and orientation, but again I think people tend to accept that judgement at face value. And I think a lot of people wrongly make the assumption that, 'well, ORIGINS is just a boardgame convention," or "the GEN CON® game convention is all role playing," and if they're not interested in that particular thing then they tend to dismiss it rather quickly, depending on their own orientation. Whereas actually all good gaming conventions possess a real spectrum of activities to participate in, and lots of different things for different interests.

The thing that has really concerned

us the most is the fact that when ORIGINS began it was billed as "The National Gaming Convention", which, to anyone that had more than a passing acquaintance with the GEN CON® game convention, would cause them to take issue with that rather bold contention. The GEN CON® game convention was, is, and always has been a national convention, from Day 1, and any attempt to portray ORIGINS as THE national gaming convention is really fallacious.

HQ: So, we have ORIGINS and we have the GEN CON® game convention — and then a new GEN CON® game convention appeared. I understand you were involved.

MC: The GEN CON® South game convention is co-sponsored by TSR and really a lot of the work going into it is done by the gaming group in Jacksonville, Florida — the Cowford Dragoons is their club name. And they've put on a convention down there for a number of years, which continues to grow, not only in size but in types of activities and in success. And we at TSR were fortunate in having been approached relatively early in their evolution as a convention, and it's been a very successful, cooperative venture ever since. Although they certainly do the lion's share of the work down there; we help them with the promotion, and putting on activities.

HQ: And you've been to every one of those, also?

MC: Not every one, no. Many. So I'm fortunate in knowing Carl Smith, and Mike DuBose, and the other people in Jacksonville, who do a very good job in putting on this convention.

HQ: Okay. Thank you once again for your articles on the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game, and especially the DAWN PATROL™ game revisions intended, as I understand it, to turn FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game, a classic *board* game, really, into a role playing form. Isn't there a FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ Society, and what are they going to do once it becomes the DAWN PATROL™ game? What do YOU think of the two games?

MC: Well, the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ game is a game that is an historical simulation that has numerous elements of role playing. It has not been widely known — the people who *have* played it and enjoy it are a pretty devoted following, and have been through the years. The FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ Society began in 1969, which is really the *old* days in gaming, if you look at it in that sense. The fact that TSR was able to identify the promise that this game had, and be able to promote it as a role playing game, prompted the revision and the new edition which will be entitled the DAWN PATROL™ game. This will further emphasize these factors, where each player's individual pilots that are on a roster can, through their pilots, win various medals, and they'll be of different nationalities and will accumulate missions and victories, and etc.

HQ: Who does the player represent, in this case; the squadron leader, or — ?

MC: Well, each player has a roster of pilots of the different nationalities, flying the different types of planes, and they'll be of different ranks, and so on. The surviving pilots, who accumulate missions and kills, or victories, gain experience and abilities, and increase themselves in rank, and are able to win awards, and so on; they become then the senior members of a squadron. So those eventually become the squadron commanders, and so on — yes.

HQ: Okay; I see. Sort of like having multiple players in a D&D game.

MC: Exactly. At any given time, any particular player might have a dozen, or a few more, individual pilots at varying levels of experience. And of course, some eventually are lost in combat; others go on to become famous aces, and so on.

The beauty of the game is that any number of contests can be set up, simply by random dice rolling, so no two games are EVER alike, and any number can play. Those are really the reasons why the game has the staying power that it does. Even though, unfortunately, it's not as well-known as others.

HQ: Due to your help, we've already begun having RPGA™ FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ tournaments.

MC: Yeah, we're hoping to have more in the future at all the GEN CON® game conventions, and at any other conventions where RPGA™ Network tournaments are being held. Through the newsletter, we want to make people aware of the game and encourage them to try it.

Our interview with Mike will continue in Issue #8.

NOTES FROM THE DM

by E. Gary Gygax

In response to **Notes For The DM**, Issue #6 of The POLYHEDRON.

I very much enjoyed Volume 2, Number 3, of The POLYHEDRON Magazine. May each each issue get better and better!

With regard to the number of actions possible in a one-minute melee round, please stress to your readership that the time period is arbitrary — other things occur than are actually checked for, and much of the game balance is based around this period of time.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the segment of six seconds was used as a base for action. Considerably, a lightly armored fighter could strike once every six seconds. This would make fighters virtually unstoppable with respect to other classes. That is, those less well trained in fighting skills could not strike this often, so fighters would quickly assume the most powerful role in the game. Magic-users would be doomed to the use of nothing but low level spells, because they wouldn't dare to try anything which would require more than a segment or two to cast.

As it is, the actions subsumed in the round includes parrying, fencing, and general circling for position. Several actual feints and strikes take place, but only one is assumed to be a serious attack. Likewise subsumed within the whole system is the power aura of a magic-user. Their innate power, as well as minor protections they place upon themselves, make them formidable opponents to attack. Thus, it is no easy matter for a monster or another character-type to actually manage to attack them.

With regard to detailed combat, I can easily do a system which does not have undue complications. It would take into account additional factors other than those developed for the typical character. The terrain would be considered. Weapons would be very important. Training and skill at both striking and parrying would be important. Hit location would be vital. Wear and tear would be a big factor. Without undue complication, a complex system of combat would probably take something like a one hour real time period to handle a fight between two evenly matched opppents of about sixth or seventh level. As I see it, the fun is in role playing and adventuring, not individual combat. Therefore, the adventuring and role playing are stressed — combat is glossed over.

Clerics are not just medics. They do have the largest repertoire of curative spells, but are vitally important for magical information gathering, defense, and many other elements of the AD&D™ game.

There is some overlap, but not much, with the powers of the Druid class. Some spells, like the 4th level *Speak with Plants* and 7th level *Control Weather*, are of equal power. Druidic cures often arrive a level later than a normal Cleric's, and some rare spells come earlier for Druids (cf *Speak with Animals*).

More Clerical spells (23 of 76) are Alterations than any other type, for the same reasons why most Magic-User spells are also of this category; it's the most generally useful. Divinations are next on the list, with 13; then come Abjurations and Necromancy (12 each), Conjurations (9), with 4 Enchantment/Charms, 2 Evocations, and one Invocation (*Spiritual Hammer*). Invocations are unused elsewhere in the AD&D game system, and would more appropriately be reclassified as a straight evocation.

Here are some general notes on a variety of Clerical spells.

DETECT EVIL: There is a 10% chance per level of the cleric of getting an alignment reading of sorts if the evil is great. The degree of evil is always apparent. This *doesn't* work on characters.

LIGHT: This is only equal to torchlight, and *cannot* be used to blind creatures.

CHANT: The only way to add 1 to damage, but it ties up the cleric for 10 minutes plus. Best for a supporting cleric with plenty of warning.

HOLD PERSON: The caster states whether it's aimed at 1, 2, or 3 creatures, thus determining the penalties to the save. Very valuable, as a helpless opponent is in bad shape; but watch the list of legitimate targets carefully (given in the spell).

KNOW ALIGNMENT: Often cast at the beginning of an adventure, as an insult to characters, all of whom (except for Lawful Goods) should retaliate by disrupting the casting, leaving the area quickly, or some other equally rude action.

SLOW POISON: Cast this on the best fighter *before* the battle starts, if you know you're going against poisonous things. It lasts a long time (1 *hour* per level), and will keep the fighter up when a save is blown.

SPIRITUAL HAMMER: The Cleric's ranged weapon (unless Lakofka's Magic Stone is added). But you've got to cart around an extra war hammer (5 pounds, 1gp) for each one you want to cast.

ANIMATE DEAD: Cranking up big skeletons is described in DMG. If you animate a fallen comrade so he can walk home, remember the 6" movement rate of zombies.

CURE DISEASE: With a 10 minute casting time, if a fast disease occurs (cf violet fungus) you'd better have a Druid along (C:1r).

PRAYER: *Note* that this "duplicates the effects of a chant with regard to bonuses of +1 for friendly attacks and saving throws"... but does *NOT* affect damage.

NEUTRALIZE POISON: Does *not* revive victims as the *slow poison* spell, so you need both.

TONGUES: *Note* that if the creature does not have a language, this is ineffective. The DM must decide what creatures have languages; a world full of languages can be both wonderful and confusing.

DISPEL EVIL: *Note* the -7 penalty for *ALL* creatures which *could* be affected — whether the cleric touches anyone or not. A truly great protective device for tough encounters.

PLANE SHIFT: There's one of those little "tuning forks" for *each* plane in existence. If you've got a full set, fine; they make nice treasures for lairs, otherwise.

TRUE SEEING: This catches *everything*, including alignments, but only for 1r/level.

FIND THE PATH: This tells *everything* you need to do to get wherever you specify — such as, "pick up torch, stick in hole by fireplace, pull sconce to open super-secret door." It has a good duration, too: 1 turn per level.

WORD OF RECALL: A must for high level clerics, as a fast escape (1 segment).

RESTORATION: Restores 1 level only, so powerful undead (wraith, spectre, etc.) can be very costly (if you can buy this service in the first place).

Campaign Clues

by Corey Koebernick

The sweat poured down Axeman's brow as he lay hidden in the heavy underbrush. The throbbing in his left arm reminded him of Monte Carlo. He had not been this close to El Tigre since then. Axeman's ~~quary~~ quarry had led him a merry chase last summer. Headquarters was putting on the pressure. The old man made it clear – it was now or never.

El Tigre had been working on a major project ~~for some time~~ in the past few months. Several investigations indicated it would rock the free world. ~~Those~~ The investigators who had made it back alive brought few details. It mattered little to the Axeman.

Axeman knew that El Tigre must pass along this particular road to reach the interior of the jungle. Somewhere in the bush was his multi-million dollar terrorist training center. El Tigre would never reach it – of that Axeman was certain.

The previous paragraph is just one example of a situation that can develop in a well run TOP SECRET® campaign. This article, and the ones to follow, will give Administrators new incentive to turn their weekly TOP SECRET games from a string of separate situations into a unified campaign. Hopefully, it will also present the more experienced Administrator with some new ideas.

Several important factors must be studied by the Admin before setting up a campaign. The first consideration is that of time. If the Admin does not have a few minutes each day or two in which to maintain the smooth operation of the campaign, an alternative should be considered. Co-Adminstration is one such alternative.

Another idea is to ask players to do some research for you. Send them to the library to bring back newspaper articles, or to look for information on Moscow's local government. At one time, I had fifteen agents out on their own looking for articles and adventure.

A second consideration is the number of players in your area. Few Admins will be willing to set up a worldwide, multiorganizational campaign for one or two players. There is no real need to. If you have several groups of players, especially if they do not wish to play at the same time, such a campaign is very worthwhile. The first time a West German agent, an SIS agent, two CIA operatives and a London private investigator get together on one mission, you may question your decision.

The type of player that will be involved in your campaign is a factor also. Some players belong to the "blow it up if it moves," philosophy of TOP SECRET games. The second group is the "more cloak, less dagger" players who prefer "sneak" to "shoot." The first group must have plenty of bullets to dodge and villians to eliminate. These agents may be in the confiscation or investigation bureaus, but it does not seem to matter much. Many of the agents in the "sneak" group do not even carry guns on their missions. They need smoke filled rooms, slippery villains and believable assignments.

Once the Admin has firmly established his time commitments, the number of players interested and their style of play, the Admin must begin preparations. Their are several decisions that should be made prior to any book work.

~~Axeman's watch read~~ Axeman stared at his watch. It was 1:52 AM, May 15, 1984. El Tigre was due in eight minutes.

The Admin should first make a decision on campaign time scale. Is the majority of his campaign to take place in the past, present, or future? A campaign based on the old West; post-World War II Europe; present day Europe; the year 2023; or even an alternate Earth is possible. These campaigns can provide many challenges to the Admin and players alike. Admins should be certain that the interest is there. Nothing can be more frustrating than to spend weeks or months on a campaign and then find that no one is interested in playing in that time period. Modern day campaigns are the most popular. They have the advantages of easier setup in terms of complexity and time, ease of player identification and better rules integration.

Reaching ~~into his~~ Axeman reached into his pocket and pulled out his radio controlled flamethrower pen. The ~~indicator~~ indicator showed it to be empty. This trusty gadget would do him no good tonight.

The type of action must be set before the campaign begins. Will the action be man aided by machines (ie. gadgets), or man versus man? The shoe phone; the machine gun cane; the laser ring or the multipurpose fifteen-in-one watch may be acceptable pieces of equipment to your campaign. If they are, I suggest you study the "Q section" in your rule book very carefully. Once the players get ahold of their first gadget, they will want more. As a suggestion, start slow and do not give them very powerful special equipment. If you decide to run a less gadget-filled campaign, do not completely remove them from the game. A tear gas pen, a sleep gas pendant or a bomb disquised as a calculator can be useful as well as keep the campaign realistic.

The Axeman thought back to Monte Carlo. To get that close he had ~~to chase~~ chased clues through Barcelona, London and Jerusalem. Planes, trains and boats had helped him span the globe in the search for ~~El Tigre~~ his elusive prey. Now the trail led to South America.

One of the most important decisions an Admin will make when setting up a campaign is that of scale. Every Admin would love a completely organized, worldwide TOP SECRET campaign. I am no exception to the rule. To do so, however, is a mammoth task. To fully coordinate activity on this scale requires much time and dedication. Most Admins content themselves with what I call continent hopping. The agents begin in one country, usually with one organization. The Admin will keep most missions in that country, at least for several adventures. Then as the agents progress in levels, they will be sent to other countries or continents. Some Admins are creative enough to keep agents hopping in one major metropolitan city (ie. London, Washington DC, Moscow).

The new campaign Admin is encouraged to do this, at first. If you have two or more groups, put them in different cities and go from there. Then if your players show interest in more, expand. If you do stay in one city or state, find out all you can about laws, customs, political power, structures and social values. If the agents are natives to the area, instruct them on the things they would know. I once had a player who wanted to run a Mexican agent for the CIA in South America. He taught me more about Spanish culture than any textbook. The most important thing to remember is do not bite off more work than you can chew. Work well in some areas rather than poorly in all areas.

Axeman lit a cigarette as he stared into the bush. He had ~~worked for~~ been employed by the CIA, British Intelligence, and even did some free lance work, but UNIC was the best – the cream of the crop.

Many Admins are uncertain how many organizations should be made available to players once the campaign begins. The Admin may not have time to properly research every organization that is available during the campaign time period. There are three ways to handle the problem.

First, the Admin may do the best he can with all the organizations. He will get as much information as possible on each one. Then he can fully develop those organizations which the players are interested in later.

Second, the Admin can choose one special organization and study all the information available on it. A good Admin will also spend time studying those organizations which will work with or against this organization in its day to day routine. If you decided to base your campaign on an Israeli anti-terror squad, a look at the PLO and the KGB is suggested.

The third alternative is to create your own organization. This topic warrants more discussion. Creating your own TOP SECRET organization has many advantages. It requires little or no research, it helps the Admin to easily become familiar with the organization, and you can tailor it to your campaign. These organizations are also easier to expand. As of this date, I am unaware of any truly world wide organization. I am speaking of an organization that bands nations together under one roof. Creating your own international cooperative organization is just one way of using this third alternative.

More TOP SECRET® campaign tips from Corey in a future issue!

RANCH ENCOUNTERS

BOOT HILL™ Game Feature

by Bill Fawcett

Beyond the towns of the Old West were vast expanses of land controlled by the Ranches, many of which encompassed thousands of acres and constituted small societies in themselves. The cattle raised on these ranches were the economic basis for the West.

There is no question that the life of the ordinary cowboy was filled with arduous, backbreaking work. Still, there were plenty of opportunities for adventure for the cowhand and the owner of a small spread. With miles between each ranch and little possibility of help from the outside, the early big ranches were pretty much a law unto themselves. That is, most ranches had to take care of their own problems (an average ranch has from 6-36 cowhands depending on its size). They could not count on help from "nearby" ranchers who would arrive belatedly at best, or the nearest "law" commonly half a day's ride away.

For the sake of discussion we will use the J-Ranch (Jay Bar). The ***J-*** is a typical large cattle spread located in northern Texas in the years following official statehood. It covers several thousand acres of land (most of which are actually public lands) of varying quality — from grassy valleys to bare rock. The ranch has been using this "open range" for over 10 years, and understandably is very protective of the land. The nearest ranch is the Lazy K, a similar spread approximately nine miles east. The nearest town is Desolation, located about 17 miles east, or eight miles on the other side of the Lazy K. There are no real neighbors to the west, as the land is too dry and poor to support cattle.

The Oklahoma Indian territories are a three day ride to the north. 100 miles to the west will bring you to the New Mexico territory. To the south are a smattering of ranches, however, none are within 20 miles.

At the heart of every ranch is a complex of buildings that house the bulk of the hands, the owner and the cook. Often times, this was the only place where anyone passing through could stop for shelter or replenish supplies. Visitors were normally welcome at a ranch because they brought news of other areas, and also broke the monotony of ranch life. Such groups as posses, Texas Rangers, and other ranchers might appear to gain assistance from the Rancher in tracking down criminals of all sorts.

Most ranches also had a series of line shacks that provided shelter and housing in bad weather for the hands who watched the cattle on distant pastures. Outlaws often used these shacks for a night or two of relative comfort, and for meeting points. The location of most shacks was common knowledge.

A character staying in one of these shacks would be likely to have a similar system of encounters as those in the main buildings. It is acceptable for anyone to use a line shack in times of disaster, but all food used must be replaced and the rancher told of your presence if possible.

% Roll	Encounter
1-5	Rustlers (detect a loss that occurred 1-3 days ago)
6-10	Rustlers (detect a loss from 1-6 days ago)
11-15	Rustlers (detect a loss from over a week earlier)
16-18	Settlers just passing through (from 1-6 armed men)
19-22	Settlers looking to homestead "your" range (1-6 men)
23-24	Posse in pursuit of bank robbers (3-12 members)
25-27	Posse (3-12 men) with prisoners (1-4) returning after a chase
28-30	Posse returning after a gunfight with 1-4 wounded, 50% chance that the outlaws are still loose
31-35	Traveling merchant (dry goods)
36	Itinerant Preacher
37-40	Unemployed cowboy (if no job offered, 20% chance he'll steal anything he can of value)
41-44	Outlaw on the run (30% chance of posse 2-24 hours behind)
45-48	Single lawman or Ranger pursuing an outlaw (20% chance the outlaw is hiding on the ranch)
49-50	Bounty Hunter (searching for a specific criminal 60%, passing through 40%)
51-53	Bounty Hunter with a prisoner (85% dead, 15% alive)
54-65	Indian Family traveling through (20% chance they kill a cow for food), 1-8 warriors
66-72	Indian tribe passing through (20% chance they will kill 2-8 cows for food) 12-48 warriors
73-75	War party of young braves returning from a raid (50% on another tribe, 50% on another ranch) 7-12 warriors
76-78	Large War party (as above) 14-34 members (4d6+10)
79-80	Cavalry Scouts (75% Indian, 25% white men), 1-4
81-82	Commancheros (out of New Mexico) 50% will attack the ranch, 50% will rustle 6-36 cattle, 5-20 riders.
83-85	Texas Rangers after small war party (1-4 rangers)
86-88	Texas Rangers after a larger raiding party (6-24 rangers)
89-90	Cavalry (patrol of 5-8 troopers and a sargeant)
91-92	Cavalry company of 25-30 (d6+24) sargeant and lieutenant
93-95	Neighboring rancher just visiting
96	Neighboring rancher following rustlers, 1-4 hands
97	Neighboring rancher following commancheros, 5-8 hands
98	Cattle Buyer setting up a sale
99	Cattle Buyer scouting the herds (make no deals yet)
100	Cattle becoming ill, hoof and mouth disease or the like

There is also the opportunity for employment at most ranches. If a character cannot find employment he is expected to continue on, or will be assumed to have other motives for being there.

Likelihood of a job being open:

1-40	No jobs
41-70	One job
71-90	Two jobs
91-100	3-8 jobs

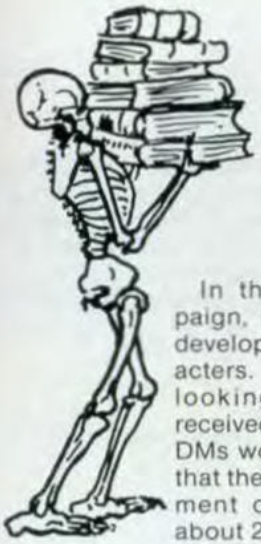
Type of job opening:

1-70	ordinary hand
71-80	head hand or foreman
81-85	cook, trail
86-90	blacksmith
91-94*	gunhand (squatters, rustlers, etc.)
95-98*	gunhand (guard payroll, bodyguard)
99*	surveyor
100*	Outlaw (rancher wants someone killed or something stolen)

** indicates temporary positions lasting 1-4 months*

Skill Needed	Pay
Riding, roping	$10/month
Experienced riding, roping,	$30/month
Riding, Wagon driving	$20/month
Cooking	$20/month
Smithing	$28/month
Gunhand (squatters, rustlers, etc.)	$100/month
Gunhand (guard payroll, bodyguard)	$50/month
Surveying	$20/month

NOTES FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER



In the ongoing campaign, your players will develop higher level characters. On the average, looking at data we've received from hundreds of DMs worldwide, it seems that the average advancement of a character is about 2-3 levels per year. In other words, a campaign that's been running for 3 years usually has many player characters averaging around 6th to 9th level of experience.

The campaign then usually levels off, to stabilize with a few powerful characters (levels up into the twenties) but with the bulk of them between 7th and 13th level. Some lower levels are still around, but this seems to be the most popular level of play. This is one reason, incidentally, that RPGA™ AD&D™ game tournament adventures are usually for levels 5-9.

What do you do, as DM, when a player's high or moderate level character is lost? This could be due to lack of available spells, blowing a critical roll, or extreme situations (such as total disintegration). If there are no low-level characters in the campaign, and the poor player is forced to run a 1st level *anything* in higher-level company, the character is handicapped from the start and has a shorter life expectancy.

If the players are experienced enough to handle it, I'll start characters off at a higher level of experience. (*Gasp!*) Note the first part of that; if the players themselves need more grounding in strategy, spell use, or whatever, they all keep working with the low levels until they've got their act together. But it's silly to tell a six-year veteran of the game that he or she must run a character all the way up from the bottom, even though everyone else has a 7-9 level character, when the original character was lost due to a blown saving throw or otherwise uncontrollable situation. My method is a variant from the system as published, but it works and doesn't adversely affect play in any way.

The first ground rule is *NEVER* to start a character equal to or greater than an existing one. Obviously, the players have spent a lot of time and effort getting there, and it's unfair to pop someone up into the same bracket. It *always* causes some resentment and charges of favoritism, so *DON'T*.

Decide on the starting level. I've used 1d4, 1d4+1, 1d3+1 and 1d3+2 for this, depending on the average level of the characters already in the campaign. I've also assigned a level, arbitrarily, especially for monk, druid, and other specialized classes with regimented hierarchies.

I set the experience point total at minimum for the level decided on, plus d%x10 (10-1000) additional. Cash on hand, *AFTER* the character is fully equipped (house rules: up to 5 oil, 2 holy water, 1 animal, any and all reasonable other non-magical items) is set equal to 10% of the experience point total. Finally, magic items are rolled for to complete the better-than-starting-level character. (I use the "Chance Per Level for Magic Item" table on DMG pg. 194, which is supposed to be for NPC town encounters, and cheerfully veto or change results as desired. Another chart is given under "Party Magic Items," DMG pg. 175-176, which is supposed to be used for randomly encountered parties.)

Finally, the player should be given notes on the character's background, acquaintances, and some history. In these cases, I often alter past reality subtly; for example, I'll tell the existent characters that they have, at several points in the past, run into this "new" character, and have possibly adventured with him or her (assuming that alignment, profession, and other variables would have given this result).

Presto — an "old" character, from scratch.

1. MAGIC MOUTH ALARM: The party may find that the area they're penetrating has an alarm system, if there's a magic-user about who could set one up. (Note that witch doctors can cast a magic mouth, according to DMG.) Just have each mouth instructed "Scream when anything screams within range." The residents of the area, if they have time, need only scream to set off the alarm. A domino-type chain can be set up merely by placing a magic mouth every 20 or 30 feet, with the same instructions, so that they set each other off.
2. PROPORTIONS: A powerfully enchanted corridor changes the characters to 1/16" height, gradually acting on them as it gets smaller so they don't notice the change. There's lots of fun in store as characters fiercely battle a normal amoeba, housefly, and other denizens of the microscopic world. (Make sure you decide on all related game mechanics first). Caution, though; magical effects should be of normal power but with reduced areas and ranges, while weapons will do insignificant damage.

   The reverse can be quite strange, with the characters enlarged to hundreds of feet tall. They are seen as huge marauders, invading giants threatening the residents of the countryside. The most powerful NPCs in the world would certainly flock to stop the characters from stepping on the cows, accidentally triggering earthquakes, and so forth.

NOTES FROM HQ

All done with the GEN CON® East game convention. It was a good one, with over 150 new members joining, over 125 players in the RPGA AD&D™ Tournament. . . we'd like to see more like this one. We probably will, what with the way folks are joining up!

We're all walking wounded after the hustle and bustle of the event; Bill says that he's found a Cleric to do a *Raise Dead*, but it'll cost many gold pieces. . .

Missing and presumed gaming: the following members are *not* at the addresses listed. We want to find them! If you know any of these folks, please interrupt their game and tell them to write. . .

Erick Jim Baechle III, 452A Franklin Ave., Hartford, CT 06114;
Elonka L. Dunin, PSC Box 70, RAF Mildenhall, APO NY, NY 09127;
Chaw Kim Choo, 362 W. 52nd St. #41 New York, NY 10019;
Steve Benifold, 454 Burks Rd., Forest Park, GA 30050;
Mike Stonebraker, 4208 Woodspring La. #807, Tampa, FL 33613;
Mikel Wayne Hess, NTC SSC Co 243, Great Lakes, IL 60088;
Kevin Rabun, 8900 I H.35 N. #2097, Austin, TX 78753;
George W. Spencer, DSA School 8116 CSTSC, Mare Is., Vallejo, CA 94592;
John H. Willey Jr., 1736 A. Kikaweo St., Schofield Barracks, Wahiawa, HI 96786

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The POLYHEDRON is proud to announce a ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Membership Drive!

The ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network (The ONLY Official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Club) is sponsoring a super-duper 9 month Membership Drive, to start at GEN CON® Game Convention on August 19th, 1982. Each and every member can participate. It works very simply: when HQ receives a new application for membership, **not a renewal**, *and* if that application has an existing member's number written on it, that existing member gets credit for recruiting 1 new RPGA™ Network member. We will keep electronic records of the recruiters and their totals. The competition runs through May, and all recruited applications postmarked after May 31, 1983 are ineligible.

Prizes will be awarded to EVERY member who recruits another! Prizes are cumulative (for 5 memberships, $5 in credits plus the special listed hereafter). Special prizes include:

1 Member: A full $1.00 credit towards ANY RPGA Network purchase. This maybe used for part of a Gift Catalog order, or saved towards a membership extension. Save them up, and get YEARS of free membership!

5 Members: One "RPGA Recruiter" button, AND one RPGA Tote Bag, with the RPGA symbol on the front. It's just the right size for pens, pencils, dice, and other gaming accessories.

10 Members: Your choice of ANY one of the "R" series of RPGA AD&D ™ modules, each one from a GEN CON® Tournament, and specifically designed with the players in mind.

20 Members: A UNIQUE offer — a T-shirt designed any way you want! Select ANY black & white art from ANY TSR product — including books, modules, or other accessories, from ANY TSR game — and we'll put it on a T-shirt JUST FOR YOU, along with your name, club, or just about anything else you want to say.

50 Members: A handsome wood and metal plaque, the same type as we give to tournament winners, PLUS a super special prize never before available: YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER, from any game you wish will be illustrated by a professional TSR staff artist in **full color!** We'll get all the details from you, including race, items owned, colors worn, and so forth. Just imagine what your gaming friends will say, with an ORGINIAL ARTWORK of your favorite game character on your wall for all to see!

100 Members: For this incredible achievement, you will receive two incredible prizes: FIRST, an Original Collectors' Edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, ***personally autographed*** by the author **E. Gary Gygax** (a very rare item), PLUS an RPGA ticket to ANY GEN CON® Game Convention you wish to attend! The RPGA Ticket covers ALL event fees, convention registration, admission into otherwise restricted seminars and events, PLUS VIP treatment for the whole weekend. Winners must supply their own transportation, food and lodging; we'll cover the rest!

The **TOP THREE** recruiters in the drive will receive very special awards. One very special AD&D™ game will be held at the GEN CON® XVI Game Convention. The Dungeon Master will be the Grand Master of Dragons himself, **E. Gary Gygax** — and YOU can be the players! The Dungeon used will be the Original, never-published, CASTLE GREYHAWK — the very birthplace of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game!!

What if the top 3 winners can't afford to come? Well, the second part of these top prizes are:

FIRST PLACE:

An ALL-EXPENSE paid trip to GEN CON® XVI Game Convention, PLUS a seat at the GREYHAWK game.

SECOND AND THIRD PLACE:

An RPGA Deluxe Convention Pass! This valuable item will cover ALL EXPENSES except transportation to the GEN CON® XVI Game Convention you wish to attend, including meals, lodging, all event and convention fees, and Deluxe VIP treatment for the weekend, plus a seat at the GREYHAWK game.

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These light brown, poly-vinyl suede tote bags measure 5"×11", and are suitable for carrying your dice, mini-games, or what have you. They are monogrammed with the RPGA™ Logo, and have sturdy handles that make carrying easy.
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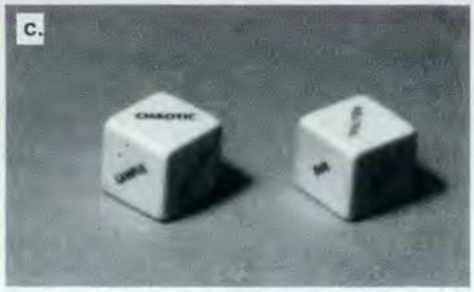

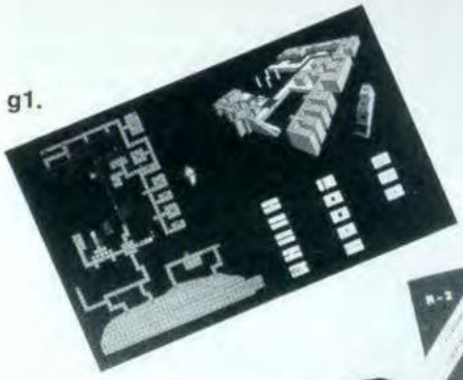

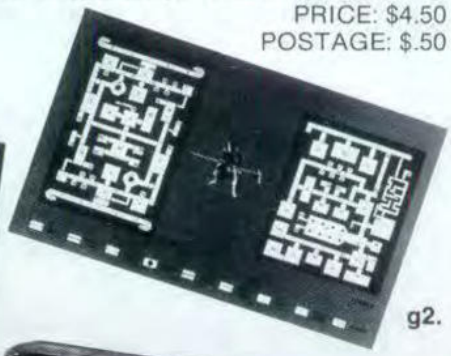

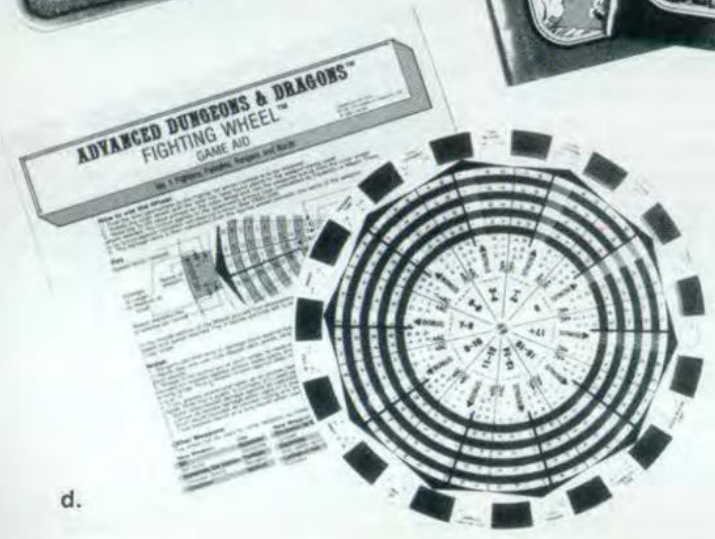

CONVENTION WRAPUP

GEN CON® South Game Convention
Feb, 4-7, Jacksonville.

The Cowford Dragoons once again hosted our southern member of the GEN CON® convention series, moving to a new setting (the Jacksonville Beach Flag Pavilion) instead of the cramped Ramada Inn previously used. The Pavilion had ample floorspace for most of the games, and the dealers' balcony was appreciated by the tradespeople and gamers alike, from which they could watch the many events being conducted in the circular arena below.

Mike Carr, Frank Mentzer, Skip Williams, and Eric Shook came down from Lake Geneva to operate the TSR and RPGA™ Network booths, also running tournaments and gaming with attendees throughout the weekend. They predict that next year's "South" should attract 1000 or more.

The AD&D tournament scenarios used were "The Great Bugbear Hunt" for the Open (by Frank Mentzer, RPGA Module R-5), and "The Eye of the Bog" for the RPGA tournament, created by Eric Shook (Module R-6). All the necessary tournament materials (plus spares) were prepared by RPGA Asst. Coordinator Bill Hoyer, eliminating many potential problems, and was a great help to running the events. Take note, you who plan to run role playing tournaments...

Two four-hour sessions of the AD&D Open's first round were held, the first on Friday night (drawing 21 teams of 7 players each), and one Saturday morning (drawing 126 players, for a total Open attendance of 273). Saturday's opening round of the RPGA AD&D tournament drew 35 players (in teams of 5), 20 of whom signed up at the convention!

The 3-hour Open and RPGA Final rounds were held Sunday, and the winners were announced at the Awards ceremony. The only complaint about either tournament was that the Open scenario was in an outdoor setting, and dungeon types were apparently preferred.

As usual, the RPGA Final Dungeon Masters discussed their best players and arrived at a consensus on the winner:

DAVID KELLY, of Parsippany, NJ

The RPGA tournament, with its emphasis on role playing and cooperation, was very well received, and several comments showed the players' interest in the unusual scenario (one of the characters was a bard).

CWA CON
May 21-23, Wheaton, IL

The RPGA™ Network ran its first tournament outside of a TSR Hobbies, Inc. sponsored convention — the CWA (Chicago Wargamers Association) Convention held at the Du Page County Fairgrounds.

Despite a relatively small turnout, those RPGA™ Network Members who did participate in the tournament were quite pleased with the play of the tournament. There were 20 entrants in the first round, 13 of which advanced to the second and final round. The quality of role-playing was very high as usual in an RPGA Network tournament — our DMs commented most favorably on the level of role-playing in general, but specifically on adherence to alignment, and overall leadership and knowledge of rules.

The tournament's best player was determined to be **KEN KING** of Glenwood, IL. Second place went to **MARK BLUMBERG** of Skokie, IL. The team voted as best included **STEVE LIERLY** of Davenport, IA, and **GARY ZEAL** of Skokie, IL. The winners received extensions on their memberships, copies of the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome, autographed copies of R-1, *To the Aid of Falx*, and R-2, *The Investigation of Hydell* and a set of Grenadier Models AD&D™ cast metal figures. All other finalists received a one year extension on their memberships.

One other RPGA Network "first" occurred at the CWA Convention; a FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ aerial combat game competition. Only four players vied for the top player with **JEFF WEISS** of Milwaukee, WI emerging as a winner. Jeff's prize was an autographed copy of the 6th edition of the FIGHT IN THE SKIES™ aerial combat game.

Other finalists in the AD&D tournament were:

Joseph Adlesick, Chicago, IL, **Tom Bartelt**, Chicago, IL, **Marc Blumberg**, Skokie, IL, **Darren Brooks**, Skokie, IL, **Mark Ericson**, Glen Ellyn, IL, **Paul Jesernig**, Bolingbrook, IL, **Philip Polli**, Elk Grove, IL, **Joseph Schuler**, Homewood, IL, **Bob Waldbauer**, Elkhorn, WI

GEN CON® East Game Convention
June 17-20, Chester, PA

Though beset by troubles in preparation, this large eastern convention went well, drawing over 2000 gamers to the experienced site of Widener College (which has hosted dozens of conventions of all types for years). Several problems in staffing and preparation resulted in the late February move of the site from the originally planned New Jersey location.

It takes 9 months to put a big game convention together, but GEN CON® Coordinator Skip Williams, assisted by Dr. Don Snow, Dave Conant, and Tim Everett, put the event together in the amazingly short span of 3 months. A special thanks to RPGA Member David Axler, of Philadelphia, for stepping in to run things on the local end, as well as to his well-organized staff and cast of dozens.

TSR arrived in force, bringing in over 30 TSR employees and a huge booth featuring Tim Hildebrandt (famed fantasy artist featured on and in DRAGON™ magazine #49), science fiction's Hugo Award-winning editor George Scithers

(now of AMAZING STORIES™ magazine, the original Hugo Gernsback creation) as well as TSR personalities (in alphabetical order) E. Gary Gygax, Ernie Gygax, "Jake" Jaquet, Kim Mohan, Merle Rasmussen, Duke Seifried, Jim Ward, and RPGA Network Staff members Bill Hoyer, Mary Kirchoff, and Frank Mentzer.

Many noted game publishers and distributors displayed their wares in the popular dealer's room, including The Armory, Chaosium, Inc., Eon Product/Nova Game Designs, Fantasy Games Unlimited, FASA & Martian Metals, Gamelords, Game-Science, Grenadier Models, Mayfair Games, Miniature Figurines, Ltd., Shield Laminating, TSR Hobbies, and many others. Former TSR artists Jeff Dee and Bill Willingham were on hand, and their "professional drawings while-u-wait" booth was well received.

TSR unveiled their newest role playing release at East: the GANGBUSTERS™ role playing game, based on the cops and criminals of America in the 1930's. Designer Mark Acres entertained all comers in a special all-weekend series of demonstrations games. The game system is remarkably good and playable, and we've talked Mark into writing articles about it for The POLYHEDRON! TSR also displayed their new ENDLESS QUEST™ books (in which the plot depends on the reader's choices at key points).

Grenadier's booth was impressive, consisting of a castle wall section in which all of their figures were displayed, some painted and arranged into beautiful dioramas (photo on this page, courtesy of Grenadier Models).

The AD&D Open Tournament scenario was "The Fairy Mound of Dragonkind," created by Jim Ward, who ran the event. In it, the characters were all searching for magical restoration of their youth. It drew 290 players in teams of 8. Although the event was planned for 30 teams, 35 actually played, and 8 of those were selected to play in Sunday's Final round, which took the same characters back into the Mound, each quested to return with a specific item.

Each member of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams received a Certificate of Merit. In addition, first place team members won a $20 credit (redeemable at any dealer's booth), and each 2nd place team member won a $10 credit.

The "Dwarven" quest for the Rod of Seven Parts, a series of four AD&D™ modules by Frank Mentzer, was introduced in the RPGA Tournament. The two-part R-7 Module ("Igex Pass/The Fiery Furnace" and "Thor's Fountain") served as the opening and semi-final rounds, and R-8 ("Yog's Dessert") was used as the Final. The Friday and Saturday sessions of the opening round attracted over 100 players, with 2/3 of them advancing into the Saturday night Final. The Final DMs got together over Sunday breakfast to decide on the best player overall, as well as the best team in the Final round, and the winners were announced at the RPGA Members Meeting at noon.

The Best Player (based on quality of role playing, knowledge of rules, and cooperation, was:

TODD MCINTYRE, of Malvern, PA

Todd received a special copper "Winner's Buckle" (a new but to-be-continued Award from RPGA Network HQ), plus a handsome plaque and a 2-year membership extension. The Best Players on each of the other Final teams were **Dave Axler**, **Bob Jeffries**, **Dave Kelly**, and **Rich Pichnarczyk**, and each of them received a one-year extension.

We allowed Finalists to assemble their own teams, and gave awards to the group that cooperated the best towards achievement of the goals of the scenario. Each member of the Best Team received a copy of TSR's "Classic Warfare" autographed by the author, E. Gary Gygax, plus a pewter RPGA belt buckle and a one-year membership extension. They were:

Ben Barnett	Silver Spring, MD
Dave Markowitz	Glen Mills, PA
Neil Maruca	Manville, NJ
Richard Pell	Columbia, MD
Rich Pichnarczyk	Manville, NJ
Fred Stratton	Berlin, NJ

GEN CON® XIV Game Convention August 19-22, Parkside University, Kenosha WI

As we go to press, this fest looks great. Many of you may be reading this while waiting for an event to start. So write to us, and give us YOUR side of the convention! And remember to drop in at the RPGA Members Meeting Saturday night, and meet our special guests; see the program book for scheduling.

We'll publish a full report on the convention later this year. Meanwhile — may you make all your saving throws!

CONVENTION ADDITIONS

****CENTRAL USA****

MDG WINTER GAMEFEST (November 12-14, Detroit, MI): Science Fiction, Fantasy, War games and miniatures. Send an SASE to: Metro Detroit Gamers, W11 Info, POB 787, Troy, MI 48099

****WESTERN USA****

PACIFICON (September, San Jose, CA): Gaming. Contact POB 5548, San Jose, CA 95150

WESTERN RECON '82, (November 12-14, Salt Lake City, UT): Science Fiction and Fantasy Gaming. Contact Karl Miller, 837 N. University Village, Salt Lake City, UT 84108

ARRIVING AT THE SMALL EASTERN VILLAGE OF WY PONG, GODSWIND AND NORANDIR BEGIN TO LOOK ABOUT, SEARCHING FOR THEIR FRIEND, HOPING TO FIND HIM ALIVE.

NOT MUCH, IS IT ?

AYE, BUT IT DOES HAVE AN INN. IT IS THERE WE'LL FIND GORNDIL, IF WE FIND HIM AT ALL !

DISMOUNTING, GODSWIND AND NORANDIR ENTER THE INN. OUT OF ANOTHER DOORWAY EMERGES AN OLD MAN. WHEN QUESTIONED, HE HESITATES TO TELL OF THE GUESTS UNDER HIS ROOF.

...SORRY, BUT I CAN'T TELL STRANGERS.

ARE YOU SURE, OLD MAN ?

AH, WELL, YOU FELLOWS LOOK TRUSTWORTHY. SECOND DOOR ON THE RIGHT.

STRANGE, HOW A GOLD PIECE CAN CHANGE A GREEDY MIND.

THEIR RAP ON THE DOOR IS GREETED BY A FAMILIAR FACE - THAT OF VALADRIEL MORNINGBIRDS.

VALADRIEL ! HOW GOOD IT IS TO SEE YOU.

IT IS PLEASANT TO SEE YOU TOO, GODSWIND THALERDUR; AND GREETINGS TO YOU, NORANDIR !

MIDO ! COME IN. THERE IS MUCH TO SAY. IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME, SINCE WE LAST TRADED WORDS.

ONCE INSIDE THE ROOM, THEY DISCOVER ANOTHER FRIEND, THE ELF ARETAR. IN ONE OF THE BEDS, GORNDIL LIES AWAKE BUT SPEECHLESS. VALADRIEL AND ARETAR EXPLAIN THE EVENTS THAT LED TO THEIR PRESENT CONDITION.

I WAS VERY WORRIED ABOUT GORNDIL, AFTER RECEIVING THAT FRIGHTFUL IMPRESSION. IT RELIEVES ME GREATLY TO FIND HIM ALIVE, BUT WHY DOES HE NOT SPEAK ?

AS WE WERE ENTERING THE VILLAGE, WE WERE JUMPED BY THIEVES...

"AS GORNDIL CHARGED A GROUP OF THEM, HE WAS STRUCK BY AN ARROW IN THE THROAT. THE WOUND IS HEALING WELL, BUT HE WILL NEVER SPEAK AGAIN. WE DROVE THE THIEVES OFF, AND TENDED TO GORNDIL'S SEVERE WOUND.

THAT NIGHT WE CHECKED INTO THIS INN. THE NEXT DAY TARL SPOTTED ONE OF THEM. HE TRAILED HIM TO A BUILDING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VILLAGE.

THE NEXT NIGHT, TARL AND I WENT TO THE PLACE AND BROKE IN, SEARCHING ABOUT. WE FOUND THEIR TREASURE STASH. IT WAS CONCEALED BENEATH A RUG AND DOOR.

WELL, WE BOTH FILLED OUR POUCHES AND WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE BY THE WINDOW WHEN WE WERE FOUND OUT.

THE THIEVES HAD RETURNED, AND THEY DID NOT APPRECIATE OUR PRESENCE. NOR DID WE CARE FOR THEIRS. AFTER THE FIGHTING, ONE OF THE THIEVES ESCAPED WITH A BAD AXE WOUND AND FIVE LAY ON THE FLOOR DEAD, TARL AMONG THEM. OUR REVENGE WAS NOT SWEET."

ALL EVENTS REVEALED, THE FOUR DISCUSS THEIR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE WELL INTO THE NIGHT. DURING THE NEXT WEEK AS GORNDIL'S WOUNDS HEAL, THE OTHERS SPEND THEIR TIME GETTING A WORTHY GROUP OF ADVENTURERS TOGETHER. IN THE END, TWO PATHS ARE TAKEN. GODSWIND AND ARETAR HEAD BACK WEST TO ATTEND AN IMPORTANT COUNCIL. NORANDIR, VALADRIEL AND GORNDIL, WITH THEIR NEW COMRADES LYGENGAR, FREEKOR, HILDA AND NELDOROS, HEAD INTO THE FAR EAST IN SEARCH OF HIGH ADVENTURE.

YET, ALWAYS THE MEMORY OF HOME AND THEIR LOVED ONES IS THERE.

CONTINUED.....